

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L PARIS 16879

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TAGS: PFOR FR CH UR
SUBJ: FRENCH VIEWS ON CHINA

1. NEW PRC AMBASSADOR TO PARIS

ACCORDING TO THE QUAI DEPUTY DIRECTOR FOR ASIA,
LECLERCQ, THE FRENCH HAVE GIVEN AGREEMENT FOR THE NEW
PRC AMBASSADOR TO FRANCE. SINCE THERE HAS BEEN NO
FORMAL ANNOUNCEMENT, HE WAS RELUCTANT TO GIVE THE NAME,
BUT SAID THAT THE AMBASSADOR IS A SENIOR AND EXPERIENCED
DIPLOMAT. LECLERCQ THOUGHT THE NEW AMBASSADOR SHOULD
BE ARRIVING SOON. IN THE MEANTIME, THE FRENCH HAVE
FOUND IT RATHER DIFFICULT TO DEAL WITH THE CURRENT
CHARGE WHO IS NOT VERY EFFECTIVE.

2. SOLIDITY OF HUA'S POSITION

THE FRENCH BELIEVED THAT HUA WAS CONSOLIDATING HIS
POSITION AS NUMBER ONE LEADER. THE FACT THAT HE HAS
BEEN ABLE TO PUT OFF THE REHABILITATION OF TENG AND HAS
RESISTED MODERNIZATION EFFORTS BY THE MILITARY SHOW THAT
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HE IS A FORMIDABLE POLITICAL FIGURE. HE IS CLEARLY NOT
THE ONLY ONE WITH POWER, AND MANY DECISIONS ARE MADE ON
THE BASIS OF A CONSENSUS INVOLVING OTHER TOP LEADERS.
THE FRENCH THINK THAT ONE OF HUA'S ADVANTAGES IS THAT HE
IS CONSIDERED A CENTRIST. HE MOVED FIRMLY TO ELIMINATE
THE "LEFTISTS" (GANG OF FOUR) AND HE IS ABLE TO RESIST
THE RIGHTISTS (TENG AND COMPANY). MANY OTHER LEADERS

SUPPORT HUA BECAUSE THEY WISH TO AVOID A SWING TOWARD EITHER EXTREME, THE FRENCH THINK. LECLERCQ THOUGHT THAT CHINESE FOREIGN POLICY WAS NOW "ON ICE" BECAUSE THE LEADERSHIP WAS MORE INVOLVED WITH OTHER PROBLEMS THAN CHANGING POLICIES FOLLOWED OVER THE PAST FEW YEARS. WHEN THE LEADERSHIP STRUGGLE HAS BEEN RESOLVED, CHINA MIGHT BE PREPARED FOR SOME MORE POLICY CHANGES CONCERNING VIETNAM AND SOUTHEAST ASIA OR THE NON-ALIGNED/THIRD WORLD COUNTRIES. KNEE-JERK ANTI-SOVIETISM MIGHT THEN BE REPLACED BY A MORE FLEXIBLE -- AND EFFECTIVE -- POLICY, FOR EXAMPLE IN AFRICA.

3. SINO-SOVIET RELATIONS

LECLERCQ, WHO HAS SERVED IN MOSCOW AS WELL AS PEKING, SAID THAT HIS ORIGINAL JUDGMENT AT THE DEATH OF MAO THAT A SINO-SOVIET RAPPROCHEMENT WAS NOT POSSIBLE HAS BEEN VINDICATED. THE RECENT ALEXANDROV ARTICLE ON THE SOVIET SIDE AND THE TACHING CONFERENCE ON THE CHINESE SIDE SHOW THE SHARPLY CONFLICTING PROPAGANDA POSITIONS. HUA'S EDITION OF MAO'S FIFTH VOLUME ALSO PICKS UP ALL ATTACKS ON THE USSR AND DELETES ANYTHING GOOD WHICH MAO SAID ABOUT MOSCOW DURING THE PERIOD COVERED IN THE VOLUME. THE FRENCH THINK THAT THE POLEMIC WILL INCREASE IN INTENSITY, AND WHATEVER THE RESULT OF THE INTERNAL POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS, THIS POLICY WILL PROBABLY NOT BE CHANGED.

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